

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of October 4, 2020

Partnership in the Gospel

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Philippians 1:3-5](#)

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

- As Paul sits in jail, he prays for the Philippians with thanksgiving & joy
- From where does this joy come? Thanksgiving to God while suffering in prison comes from a settled faith in the goodness and sovereignty of God. A blessing of that sovereignty is Paul's sweet relationship with the Philippians.
- "We believe that this good God, after creating all things, did not abandon them to chance or fortune but leads and governs them according to his holy will, in such a way that nothing happens in this world without God's orderly arrangement. Yet God is not the author of, and cannot be charged with, the sin that occurs. For God's power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible that God arranges and does his works very well and justly even when the devils and the wicked act unjustly. We do not wish to inquire with undue curiosity into what God does that surpasses human understanding and is beyond our ability to comprehend. But in all humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us, being content to be Christ's disciples, so as to learn only what God shows us in the Word, without going beyond those limits. This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort since it teaches us that nothing can happen to us by chance but only by the arrangement of our gracious heavenly Father, who watches over us with fatherly care, sustaining all creatures under his lordship, so that not one of the hairs on our heads (for they are all numbered) nor even a little bird can fall to the ground without the will of our Father. In this thought we rest, knowing that God holds in check the devils and all our enemies, who cannot hurt us without divine permission and will." (*Belgic Confession, 1561*)
- Because of their "partnership"; What was this partnership? It at the very least involved sacrifice for Paul and the ministry of the Gospel.
- "This must always be the bond between Christians. If we unite with others on the basis of affluence, we will exclude the poor. If we unite along social lines, we will exclude those who move and live differently than we do socially. If we unite based on education, we will exclude those with differing educational experiences. In all of these cases the witness and the fellowship of the church will suffer." (*James Montgomery Boice*)
- Remember, Paul was Jewish and the church at Philippi is largely Gentile
- What is the basis of Christian fellowship?

Questions for Further Study: *Philippians 1:3-5*

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- Even in these early verses of the letter, we begin to find some insight into the ways that Paul finds joy in the Philippians and in the Lord. What does Paul **remember & enjoy** in these relationships?

- **Do you enjoy others** in the church? Why?
- Paul is **thankful & joyful** before God. **What about you?** Why?
- Paul says the Philippians are his **partners in the gospel**. What might he mean?
- Is there anyone you would consider a partner in the gospel? **What does the partnership look like?**
- **Pray together**. Practice **thanking** God for others in the church. Ask God for **joy**, and for **partnership** in the gospel.

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org